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con last year obtained, at a place called "Kotloo" by the Indians, about 100 miles south-east of the post, "numerous animal fossils, some of the genus *Bos*, some of the *Ovibos moschatus*, and some jaw-bones with teeth of the mastodon," as he supposed.

A third Paper was the following—

3. *On the portion of the Coast of Labrador between Blanc Sablon Bay, in lat. 51° 20' N., and Cape Harrison, in lat. 55° N.* By Captain R. V. HAMILTON, R.N., late of H.M.S. *Vesuvius*.

THE coast of Labrador was rediscovered by John Cabot in 1497, having been originally discovered by the Scandinavians about the year 1000. It extends from Cape Chidleigh, in lat. 60° N., at the entrance of Hudson's Bay, to the river St. John, in lat. 50° 17' N., which forms the boundary between it and Lower Canada, and from there to Blanc Sablon Bay is under Canadian jurisdiction, the rest of the coast being under the Government of Newfoundland.

The land is for the most part composed of granitic rocks, generally bare on the summit of the hills, which rise to a height varying from 500 to 700 feet, except in the vicinity of Sandwich and Esquimaux Bays, where they rise to a height of 1400 and 1500 feet, and are never clear of snow. Where not bare, the rocks are covered with a soft springy moss to a depth of 3 or 4 feet, most fatiguing for walking over. The lower grounds near the sea (and I believe for some distance inland) are almost covered with a very dense growth of spruce-pine, almost impenetrable; and as very venomous mosquitoes, and still more venomous black flies, are in myriads during the summer, none but a fly-fisherman ever penetrates more than 5 or 6 miles into the interior during that season. In winter the numerous lakes connected to one another by streams afford an easy method for the trappers to penetrate 25 to 30 miles. From their account, the interior country is very similar to the sea-coast, but not so thickly wooded. None of the rivers are navigable for anything but boats.

Climate.—The climate of this coast, which corresponds to England in latitude, is very severe. Ice does not leave it till June, in which months frosts are not uncommon. The ponds are frozen over by the end of September, and the bays and inlets by Christmas. Patches of snow remain throughout the year in sheltered spots. In winter the sea is frozen over 20 miles from the land.

The general temperature of the sea-coast is rarely above 50° in summer, more generally 40° to 45°, the sea varying from 38° to 42°.

In deep bays and inlets it is much warmer. I have known the temperature of the air in Sandwich Bay as high as 76° in July, the water being 60° . At the head of Esquimaux Bay, 120 miles from the sea, it was quite warm in September; but in winter it is 50° below zero occasionally. In these inlets, which are sheltered from the cold fogs brought in by every breeze from the sea, and which add so materially to the dangers of navigation, spruce, juniper, and birch trees are found of sufficient size to build vessels of 60 and 70 tons.

Arctic Current and Ice.—The great cause of the severity of this climate is the cold Arctic current flowing along its shores, which brings down immense floes of ice from Davis Straits every year, from March to June, and even July. The enterprising sealers of Newfoundland reap a rich harvest of young seals on these floes, a work as exciting and perilous as the whale-fishery, and, if successful, as lucrative.

In 1863 I was unable, in a steamer, to enter the harbour of St. John, in Newfoundland, on the 1st and part of the 2nd of June, an immense quantity of drift-ice having filled the harbour and neighbouring sea. Later in the same season it took me from the 2nd to the 13th July to go from the island of Fago, on the east coast of Newfoundland, to the Strait of Belleisle, a distance of 150 miles only, owing to an immense pack of ice, extending, from the report of a sealer, 150 miles to the eastward and 100 miles to the northward of Newfoundland. Some of this ice, I think, must have been from Spitzbergen, as it was much heavier than any I have seen in Baffin's Bay. The French fishing-vessels which leave France in April were unable to enter their ports in Newfoundland till the middle of July, generally arriving there early in June. In 1864 there was almost as much ice on the coast, but a fortnight earlier.

Bergs.—During the last four summers an immense number of ice-bergs, many of them 300 feet high and a quarter of a mile long, have also come down from Davis Straits. In 1861, for a distance of 400 miles, we never had less than twenty, frequently fifty in sight at once. I cannot estimate the number seen at less than 70 or 800. In 1862, 200 were aground between St. John's and 30 miles south of it for a month, but were not so numerous as the year previous on the Labrador coast. In 1863-64 the number near the land was not so great, but vessels to the eastward of the banks reported an unusually large number of bergs, and collisions were more numerous than usual. So much ice and so many bergs have not been seen on the Newfoundland shore for fifty years. I think a clear-out from Baffin's Bay, similar to that in

1816-17, must have occurred. Last year would, I am convinced, have been an excellent one for Arctic exploration; and doubtless the present year will be so, as the removal of so many (probably 2000 or 3000) icebergs from the lower part of Baffin's Bay must give great facility for the drift-ice being blown out by the northerly winds, which prevail in that bay during spring.

Flora.—Notwithstanding the severity of the climate, the land is not devoid of a flora. Besides the spruce, juniper, and birch trees, already mentioned, several varieties of wild flowers bloom during the short summer; wild berries are also numerous and very abundant. The most common are the blue-berry, whortle-berry, partridge-berry, and bake-apple: the latter is so called from its tasting like a baked apple, and resembles a white raspberry in appearance. Wild strawberries, currants, and raspberries, are found in sheltered spots; the latter always spring up after a wood has been burnt, although there was no trace of them before. Several varieties of ferns are also to be found; but the most useful plant, which is very abundant, is the "Indian cup," so called from its shape (I believe it is the English "Pitcher plant"), or *Sarcenia purpurea*; a decoction from the root being an admirable remedy for small-pox, only recently brought to the knowledge of our medical profession, but known to the Micmac Indians for many years. It is also used by the Labrador settlers for colds and rheumatism.

There is also a small shrub, called "the Labrador tea-plant," its leaves being used when they are out of tea.

The fishermen on their arrival, in June or July, plant potatoes, turnips, and young cabbage-plants, which come to maturity by the middle of August.

Fauna.—The fauna is composed principally of animals valuable for their fur:—the silver fox, whose skin is worth from 20*l.* to 30*l.*, the black fox, scarcely less valuable, red and white foxes, martens, sables, otter, beaver, black bear, deer, and wolves. Forty to fifty pounds are frequently made by a winter's trapping.

Ptarmigan, spruce and birch partridges, are numerous in winter, and in summer myriads of curlew, plover, several varieties of duck, and Canadian geese, breed in the interior, or in the numerous islets on the sea-coast. They are shot in great numbers when congregating for their southern flight in autumn.

Salmon and trout are the principal fresh-water fish; the former weighing from 8 to 15 lbs., the latter seldom exceeding 5; but in winter some are caught in the lakes, by cutting a hole in the ice, weighing 50 or 60 lbs.

In Esquimaux Bay the white fish, which forms the principal food

of the Hudson's Bay Company's servants, is caught. It more nearly resembles meat than any fish I have ever eaten. I am told the men who live on it stand more fatigue than those who live on flesh.

Inhabitants.—Uninviting as the coast is, it possesses a resident population of British descent numbering about 1600, scattered in various localities, who earn a comfortable livelihood by cod-fishing in summer, trapping or sealing in winter. Their average earnings are from 70*l.* to 90*l.* a year. They are comfortably housed, and well supplied with the comforts of life, by traders, who barter flour, salt-meat, tea, &c., for their catch of fish, seals, &c. The wild independence of the life possesses charms that, in their opinion, more than balance the comforts of a more civilized country.

Esquimaux.—There are about 200 Esquimaux also, principally in the vicinity of Esquimaux Bay or Hamilton Inlet, where they employ themselves fishing and sealing. Those who, like myself, are acquainted with the filthy condition of their countrymen in the Danish settlements of Greenland, will be astonished to hear that they live in comfortable wooden houses, like our own settlers; are quite as cleanly in their habits, if not more so. Those that I have visited had as well-stocked a dresser as could be found in most English cottages, and attention was paid to little ornaments in their houses; they also dress as the English do.

In 1863 I christened a child, and was offered ten shillings for my fee, which I requested might form a commencement for the young lady's dowry. Many, if not most, can read and write. Their grave-yard in Esquimaux Bay was nicely kept; every grave had a cross, or neat wooden tablet, with a suitable inscription. The following was the best specimen:—"To the memory of Mary Best, aged 3 months, 25 days—

"Thou wast like the dew-drop shaken
From the leafy sheltering bough
To the earth; in mercy taken,
None admire or see thee now."

Some of the other inscriptions were nearly as good.

Mountaineers.—The interior is inhabited by scattered tribes of mountaineer Indians, a branch I believe of the Creeks. They barter the productions of the chase with the Hudson's Bay Company, assembling in considerable numbers in August at North-West River, near the head of Esquimaux Bay, which then resembles a fair. Many Esquimaux are there at the same time, when the birch-bark canoe of the Indian, and graceful seal-skin káyoek of the Esquimaux may be seen floating together.

It may not be uninteresting here to mention an incident that occurred last spring. About sixty Indians from the vicinity of King's Post, belonging to the Hudson's Bay Company in Canadian Labrador, crossed over the Strait of Belleisle to the west coast of Newfoundland, and stated that, in consequence of the hunting-grounds of the tribe being almost exhausted, they had come to explore the interior of Newfoundland. Should their report be favourable, as I have no doubt will be the case, the remainder of the tribe, about 300 in number, were to follow in the autumn. They asked particularly if any Micmacs were in the vicinity, and were in great dread of them.

The Micmacs are a rather numerous tribe, inhabiting Nova Scotia and Cape Breton Island. Formerly they were numerous in Newfoundland, now there are only a few on the south coast; they could not, therefore, have had any direct communication with Labrador for years, if ever: the dread entertained of them by these mountaineers must, therefore, be traditional. I attribute it to an intercourse formerly existing between the ancestors of these mountaineers and the Red Indians of Newfoundland, before their extinction by the Micmacs, who, although a very inferior race, from their intercourse with Europeans, obtained the overwhelming advantage of firearms, and were also occasionally aided by our settlers. Mr. Peyton, of Twillingate in Newfoundland, a very old settler, who accompanied Buchan in' his attempt to communicate with the Red Indians, had one of them an inmate of his house. From him Mr. Peyton learnt that his tribe communicated with other Indians across the Straits of Belleisle, whom he called "good" Indians—the Micmacs being the bad Indians. The Red Indians were a superior race to the Micmacs and Mountaineers. These tribes when Christianized are, I believe, invariably Catholics, while the Esquimaux are all Protestants. In mentioning the latter tribe, I have said nothing of those in the vicinity of the Moravian settlement to the north of Cape Harrison, which I have not visited. They number over 2000.

The valuable cod, herring, and salmon fisheries afford lucrative employment to from 40,000 to 50,000 people from the middle of June till the beginning of November, and for which the numerous harbours and creeks on the coast are so admirably suited. Nearly 30,000 people from Newfoundland come up every year,—in many cases the whole family, from grand-parents down to infants. Their vessels are securely moored for the summer and deserted: the crews return to the dwellings they have occupied year after year, and in some cases generation after generation; repair the damages done to

their dwelling-places and fishing-premises during the winter ; launch their boats ; the able-bodied men commence fishing for cod, returning to the shore when full ; the fish are split, cleaned, salted, and dried by the old people, women and children. In good seasons the labour is very severe, but the recompense proportionally large. When not paid by shares, the wages of men are from 4*l.* to 5*l.* a month and their keep—an expensive item, as the Newfoundlander lives well, and, like all fishermen, is improvident. Should the cod-fishery fail, the herring, which is later, is quite as lucrative, but more precarious : it is equal to the best Scotch herring, but, from not being as well cured, is not so profitable. To describe the various methods of fishing would be long and uninteresting.

Americans, Nova Scotians, English and Jersey houses, employ the remainder of the men engaged in the trade. Without custom-house returns from Spain, Brazils, Italy and Portugal, where the greater part of the catch is sent direct, it is impossible to estimate the value of the fisheries ; but I consider them equal to those of Newfoundland, and the exports from that island vary from 1,000,000*l.* to 14,000,000*l.* annually.

The firm of Hunt and Henly, of London, alone ship from 20,000 to 25,000 quintals of cod annually to foreign markets, worth from 18,000*l.* to 25,000*l.*, besides salmon, which they preserve fresh to the value of from 4000*l.* to 6000*l.* They employ about 250 people in the trade, and there are many merchants more largely engaged. I cannot estimate the capital employed at less than 1,000,000*l.* 6000 or 7000 boats, each worth 20*l.*, are employed.

Except during the visit of a man-of-war, this large number of people is without any legal power to apply to; but disputes of a serious nature are rare, and much to their credit be it said, Sunday is invariably observed as a day of rest by all, and in many places a room has been set apart for Divine worship.

Till 1848 the coast had never been visited by a clergyman. In that year the present hard-working, energetic Bishop of Newfoundland paid it a visit, and seeing how greatly missions were needed, established one at Forteau, in the strait of Belleisle, and another at Battle Harbour to the northward ; and when he can raise funds for the purpose, it is his intention to establish another at Sandwich Bay. The missions have done great good. An interesting narrative of his cruise was published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

It may not be uninteresting to those who advocate the Greenland route for the Atlantic telegraph cable to know that the country from the head of Esquimaux Bay to the River Mingan, opposite Anticosti,

is an open forest, traversed by Indians in ten or twelve days during winter, and but little difficulty would be experienced in carrying the wires across the land—very much less than through the dense pine-forests on the south coast of Newfoundland, where the wires are constantly being blown down.

Tenth Meeting, April 10th, 1865.

SIR RODERICK I. MURCHISON, K.C.B., PRESIDENT, in the Chair.

PRESENTATIONS.—*S. S. Hill, Esq.; M. C. Vincent, Esq.; Mr. Alderman Gibbons; W. B. D'Almeida, Esq.*

ELECTIONS.—*J. R. Aldom, Esq., M.A., PH. D.; Major J. P. Briggs; Frederick Izard, Esq.; Thos. Lampray, Esq.; Rev. Matthew Macfie; Edward Tyer, Esq., C.E.; M. C. Vincent, Esq.*

ACCESSIONS TO THE LIBRARY.—‘Travels in Peru and Mexico’ (2 vols.), by S. S. Hill, Esq. ‘Travels in Siberia’ (2 vols.), by S. S. Hill, Esq. Both works presented by the Author. Continuations of ‘Journals,’ ‘Transactions,’ &c.

ACCESSIONS TO THE MAP-ROOM.—South America: *Kaart van de Kuste van Guijana van Cajenne tot Demerary mit bijzondere plans van de Rivieren Suriname, Coppenhame, Corentjin en Nickerie* Lieut. T. Vos, Amsterdam, 1845, with a book. America: *Tracing of part of Greenland coast, extending from Cape York to Hakluyt's Island, drawn by Kalahievora (alias Erasmus York), partly from his own observations and partly from report. Ubersicht der in Petermann's Geograph. Mittheilungen 1855 bis 1864, enthaltenen Karten.* A. von Petermann. London: *Meteorological Diagram, showing the daily elements throughout the year 1864*, by C. O. F. Cator. Switzerland: Sheet 13 of Dufour's *Atlas*, 1864. Germany: *Karte von dem Grossherzogthume Hessen*, Section Darmstadt. R. Ludwig.

The first Paper was the following:—

1. *On the Climate of the North Pole and on Circumpolar Exploration.*
By W. E. HICKSON, Esq.

THE object of the author was to prove, by the known direction of the isothermal lines of the globe, and the favourable position of the polar areas with regard to the sun owing to the inclination of the earth's axis and its diurnal motion, that the still prevalent notion of a maximum of cold at the Poles was quite erroneous. Distance from the Equator is not an accurate measure for cold, as